

UK Patent Application (12) GB (19) 2 284 560 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 14.06.1995

(21) Application No 9325060.3

(22) Date of Filing 07.12.1993

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(51) INT CL⁶
A63F 9/22

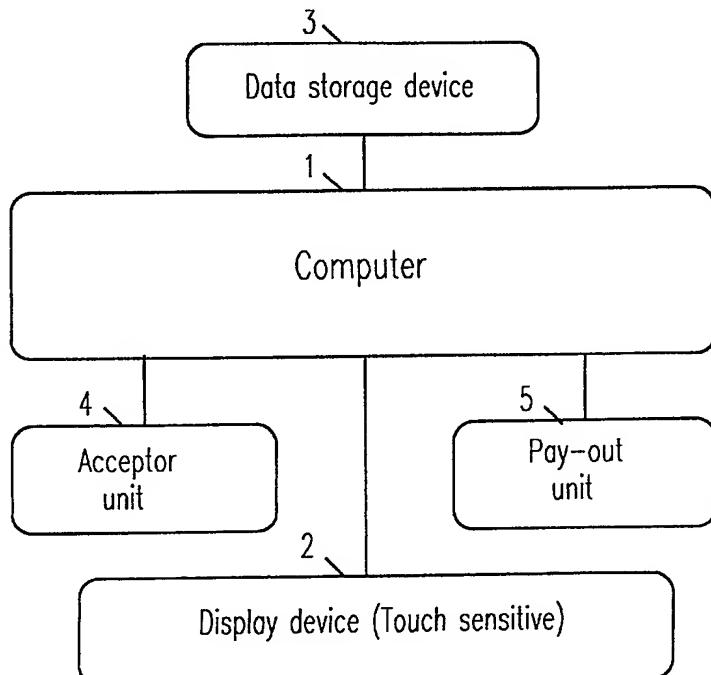
(52) UK CL (Edition N)
A6H HLM

(56) Documents Cited
GB 2271262 A

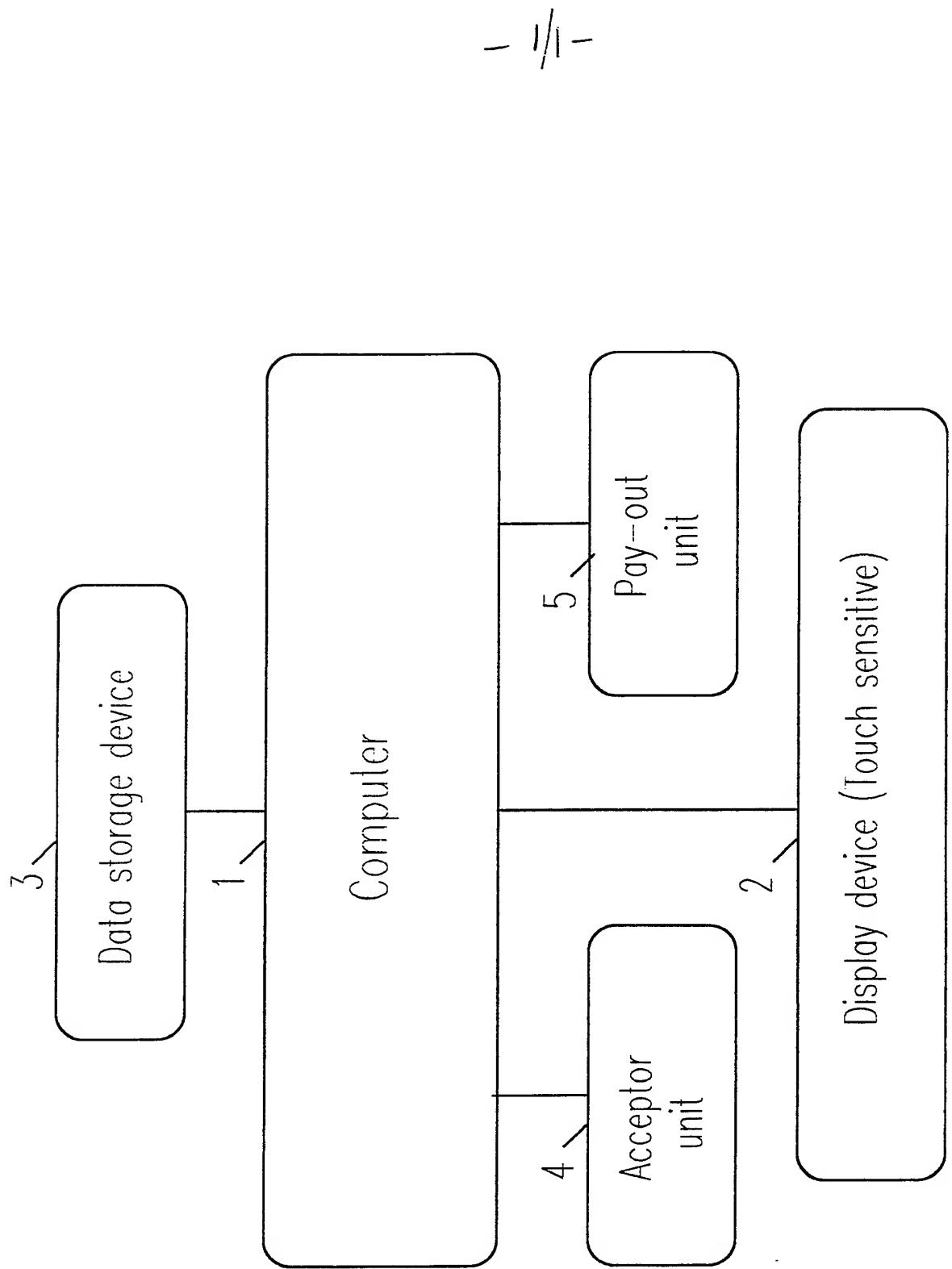
(58) Field of Search
UK CL (Edition M) A6H HJL HJM HLM
INT CL⁵ A63F 9/00 9/22 , G06F 15/44
Online database: WPI

(54) Apparatus for playing a spot-the-difference competition

(57) Apparatus for playing a spot-the-difference type competition, comprises means (2) for displaying images which are generally similar to, but different in at least one respect from corresponding images displayed. A player indicates the position or area of the apparent difference(s), or otherwise describes the nature of the apparent difference(s) which is compared in a (1) computer to the true position, area or nature of the apparent difference(s).



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APPARATUS FOR PLAYING A SPOT-THE-DIFFERENCE COMPETITION

The present invention relates to apparatus for playing a spot-the-difference type of competition. In this specification the term spot-the-difference competition is used to cover a competition in which an entrant compares at least two images which are generally similar but differ in at least one respect. The entrant uses his skill and judgement to determine the difference or differences. These images may be any visual depiction such as a photograph illustration or the like, and may be displayed on a video monitor or other display device.

The apparatus may be a coin, token, magnetic card or credit-free, amusement- or skill-with-prizes or other gaming or amusement machine. Incorporated in the machine will be the means to display images which may have been chosen randomly from a plurality of stored images. At least two images may be displayed, preferably simultaneously, these will be generally similar, but at least one image displayed will have been previously edited in such a way that it is made visually different in at least one respect from the corresponding image or images displayed. The visual difference displayed may be of any observable type.

The machine may incorporate the means to display the number, or otherwise inform the player, of visual differences discernable in the images or sets of images displayed.

A timing device may be employed by the machine in order to limit or control the amount of time the player has to view the display, or choose the location of the visual difference or differences (or otherwise respond), or both.

When it is time, according to a particular embodiment of the present invention for a player to respond, the player will use his skill in choosing the region or regions of the visual difference or differences preferably through the use of a display device equipped with a touch-sensitive screen. A trackball, joystick, buttons or the like or a combination thereof may be used in addition to or instead of the touch-screen.

The machine may incorporate the means to indicate to the player, through displaying a suitable mark or other display, the area or areas the player has selected.

The machine incorporates the means to determine the location or coordinates of the area or areas selected by the player, and the means to determine whether the location or coordinates of the area or areas chosen are coincident with the location of the predetermined area or areas of the observable difference or differences.

Alternatively, the player may be asked to otherwise describe the nature, or location of the observable difference or differences of the image or images displayed by, for example, selecting an answer from multiple answers displayed. The machine may incorporate the means for the player to make a selection or selections through the use of a touch-screen, joystick, trackball, buttons or the like or a combination thereof.

Depending on the particular embodiment of the present invention the machine may incorporate the means to indicate to the player the accuracy or inaccuracy of his selection or selections either during or after the selection process.

When the player has successfully selected the area or areas or answer, depending on the embodiment of the present invention, the player may progress to another portion of the

same game including the same or other skills, another game or the like. A prize may be awarded according to the machine's award structure. The prize may be cash, credits, points, tickets, vouchers, or the like or indeed any prize.

The machine may incorporate the means to control the play in accordance with the ability of a player to accurately select said area(s) or in accordance with other predetermined play structures, in order to maintain a predetermined ratio of income to pay-out.

In accordance with the present invention in one example, there is provided a coin, token or credit-freeed machine comprising a display screen, the means to display images on said display screen, the means to display at least two predetermined images where at least one of the images is generally similar to at least one other image displayed, but observably different in at least one respect, the means for a player to select the area or areas where those differences occur or otherwise describe the nature of those differences, the means to determine the player's selection, the means to determine the relationship between the player's selection and the predetermined area or areas or nature of the observable difference or differences.

The present invention will now be described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying illustration which is a block diagram of the components and operable parts necessary to this particular embodiment of the present invention.

A machine of the example depicted comprises a computer 1 which controls all other components of the machine, a display device 2 in this case equipped with a touch-sensitive screen, a data storage device 3 either a hard disk, CD-ROM or the like or other recording media or combination thereof which in this example stores the basis of all graphic images displayed on the display device 2 and the programme of the game. This data storage device 3 may be altered or the like in order to provide new sets of images or programmes when the need arises.

In this embodiment of the present invention the display device 2 is equipped with a touch-sensitive screen allowing the player to make his selection by touching on the area or areas of the image displayed. When the player touches the display device 2 equipped with a touch -sensitive screen, a signal is sent to the computer 1 which determines the coordinates of the region touched and contains the means to compare this with the predetermined region, programmed on the computer 1 and or contained within the data storage device 3..

The machine in this embodiment, comprises an acceptor unit 4 which upon accepting a coin or token signals the computer 1 to commence play, and a pay-out unit 5 in order to award a physical prize, in this case, such as cash, tokens, vouchers, or the like.

Initially, when the game has not been freed by coin, token or credits or the like, a series of still and or moving images may be displayed on the display device 2 informing the entrant of the game offered and inviting him to play. These images, in this embodiment, can be stored on the data storage device 3 and are displayed on the display device 2 through the control and other features of the computer 1.

Once the game is enabled, in this embodiment, by a signal sent from the acceptor unit 4 to the computer 1 play commences. The computer 1 in this case retrieves images from the data storage device 3 and displays them onto the display device 2. The player views, in this case, at least two images wherein at least one of the images has been previously edited to differ from the other corresponding image or images. An indication of the number of differences displayed may appear on the display device 2. The player selects the area or areas where he believes the difference or differences occur. In this embodiment he makes his selection by touching the appropriate area or areas directly on the display device 2 equipped with a touch screen. The computer 1 may then display on the screen a marker indicating the area or areas selected.

The computer 1, in this example, determines the accuracy of the player's selection and a visual display may be produced on the display device 2 by the computer 1 and or data storage device 3 in order to demonstrate the predetermined area or areas of difference or differences on the image or images.

Depending on the embodiment of the present invention the player may be able to make one or several selections on one or several images on one or several screens and may then progress to other levels of the game possibly including other skill competitions or the like or progressing to another game.

In this embodiment of the present invention, the player may receive a physical prize from the pay-out unit 5 after the player's results are compared by the computer 1 with a predetermined award structure or the like.

A game providing a prize of points or the like may not require a pay-out unit 5.

In another example of the present invention player control features may be employed in addition to or instead of the touch-screen such as buttons, trackerball, joystick or the like.

Therefore it is to be understood that the present invention can be embodied in a variety of ways other than specifically stated or depicted herein, without departing from the scope of the present invention.

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus for playing a spot-the-difference type competition comprising means for displaying images which are generally similar to corresponding images also displayed but apparently different in at least one respect, means operable by a player to indicate the position, or otherwise describe the nature or area of the apparent difference(s), means to determine the player's selection(s), and means to compare the player's selection(s) with the true position, area or nature of the apparent difference(s).
2. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the means operable by a player comprises a touch-sensitive screen.
3. Apparatus as claimed in any preceeding claim wherein the means operable by a player comprises keys, joystick or a trackerball.
4. Apparatus as claimed in any preceeding claim comprising means to indicate a player's selection(s).
5. Apparatus as claimed in any preceeding claim comprising means to indicate the true position, area or nature of the difference(s) apparent on the images displayed.
6. Apparatus as claimed in any preceeding claim comprising means for storing a plurality of images, and means for randomly displaying and selecting from such stored images.
7. Apparatus as claimed in any preceeding claim comprising means to indicate to a player the number or nature of difference(s) apparent on images displayed.
8. Apparatus as claimed in any preceeding claim comprising means for controlling time of the display of images to a player.
9. Apparatus as claimed in any preceeding claim which is coin, token or credit freed.

10. Apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim comprising a pay-out unit for delivering a coin, token or other item in response to the result of the comparison.
11. Apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim comprising means for maintaining a predetermined ratio of income to pay-out.
12. Apparatus for playing a spot-the-difference type competition as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawing.

Relevant Technical Fields

(i) UK Cl (Ed.M) A6H (HJL, HJM, HLM)
 (ii) Int Cl (Ed.5) A63F 9/00, 9/22; G06F 15/44

Search Examiner
MR A T BLUNT

Date of completion of Search
3 JANUARY 1995

Databases (see below)

(i) UK Patent Office collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications.

Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of Claims :-
1 TO 12

(ii) ONLINE DATABASES: WPI

Categories of documents

X: Document indicating lack of novelty or of inventive step.

Y: Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of the same category.

A: Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.

P: Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of the present application.

E: Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of the present application.

&: Member of the same patent family; corresponding document.

Category	Identity of document and relevant passages		Relevant to claim(s)
X, E	GB 2271262 A (MUZAFFAR)	paragraph linking pages 3 and 4	1

Databases: The UK Patent Office database comprises classified collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications as outlined periodically in the Official Journal (Patents). The on-line databases considered for search are also listed periodically in the Official Journal (Patents).